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Title:
Election Policy Statement Number 1: Community Welfare

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ELECTION POLICY STATEMENT BY THE PREMIER, DON DUNSTAN. 25.2.73.NUMBER 1. COMMUNITY WELFARE.

Labor believes every South Australian has a right to social security, freedom from poverty, and community respect.

Therefore, we are pledged to provide a wide range of community services to help those in need.

A magnificent start has been made.

We have given top priority to welfare services.

Over the past two years and nine months, State Government spending on Community Welfare cash assistance has risen from \$782,000 to \$3.1 million. Spending on welfare services generally has doubled from \$5.7 million to \$11.3 million.

In addition, Welfare services have been decentralised and brought closer to those who need them.

For the 1973 State elections we propose action to:

- . Increase help to family planning organisations.
- . Assist in the organisation of creches for the children of working parents.
- . Establish a system of special care services for multi-deprived and vulnerable families.
- . Provide short-term emergency assistance to sole parents.
- . Set up eight new community welfare centres (four in the city, four in the country) bringing the State total to 30.
- . Create Community ^{Welfare} Consultative Councils in all areas to provide action where there is a gap in total services.
- . Develop an Aboriginal Task Force.
- . Give further subsidies to Community Youth and recreation facilities.

FAMILY PLANNING:

Labor will increase its grants to the Family Planning Association and the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau. In line with the recommendations of the (Bright) Committee of Enquiry into Health Services, a Director of Maternal and Child Health will be appointed. The Director will play a central role in formulating policy and training programmes in this area. However, Government participation will not be at the price of flexibility in the way the work is done by the established organizations.

The Government will also examine the use of infant welfare centres and regional health centres for evening family planning clinical sessions.

CRECHES:

The Government will assist in the establishment of child care centres for children of working parents. It will work in concert with the Commonwealth Government's Pre-Schools Commission, shortly to be established. The Commonwealth has set aside \$5 million for assistance to pre-school facilities. The State Government will also investigate the possibility of giving assistance, where appropriate, to self-help child care groups in outer metropolitan areas where working mothers are disadvantaged. Early consideration will be given to the needs of the Elizabeth-Salisbury, Christies Beach, Tea Tree Gully and Campbelltown-Athelstone areas. The Government's role in this area would be co-operative and financial rather than supervisory.

SPECIAL CARE SERVICES:

The costs to the community resulting from the breakdown of families are enormous, both in terms of stress to the individuals involved, and in the financial expenditure required to maintain children in foster homes. When a family breaks up, and parents and children

are separated, the task of rehabilitation is extremely difficult. Generally, it requires large amounts of material assistance and emotional support.

Lesser assistance at critical times, before a break-up, may prevent the family's disintegration.

The Government will introduce an intensive care scheme for the multi-deprived or vulnerable family to try to prevent breakdown occurring.

Where parents appear unable to cope because of difficult circumstances, and where the removal of children due to neglect could become a possibility, the scheme will provide intensive skilled help for a period of up to six months.

Aid provided through this scheme will include home help, budget management, direct financial assistance and counselling.

The staffs of the Community Welfare Centres will play a central role in this process. They will assess the assistance required and decide how best to provide it.

On occasion, they will engage people with special skills on a sessional basis to implement overall programmes of care.

This programme will be unique in Australia.

SHORT-TERM ASSISTANCE FOR SOLE PARENTS:

Financial and other assistance is available for deserted wives and unmarried mothers in need, from the Department for Community Welfare or the Commonwealth Social Security Department.

However, little support is provided for fathers who, because of the death or the prolonged absence of the wife, are left with the care of young children.

The Government will institute a programme to provide for short-term emergency assistance to a sole parent, whether father or mother, to help that parent keep his or her family together in a time of crisis until suitable long-term arrangements can be made.

NEW COMMUNITY WELFARE CENTRES:

The Government believes that welfare services must continue to be decentralised.

They must be immediately available, easily accessible, and related to the needs of local communities.

Community Welfare Centres are therefore being established wherever the need for such facilities exist, based on projected population patterns and detailed analyses of the existing work of the Department for Community Welfare.

Community Welfare Centres will be major buildings specifically designed to provide proper facilities for the provision of social services.

The Centres will also contain facilities, such as meeting rooms and interviewing offices, which will be available for use by voluntary organisations and private bodies concerned with the provision of welfare services. They will remain open in the evenings.

The first Community Welfare Centre was opened at Elizabeth last month, and construction is about to begin on further new centres at Campbelltown, the City of Adelaide and at Port Augusta. In addition, planning is well advanced for new centres at Enfield, Christies Beach, Tea Tree Gully, Whyalla, Marion and Port Adelaide.

Because it takes considerable time to plan and construct facilities such as Community Welfare Centres, a major effort has been made to decentralise the staff of the Department for Community Welfare immediately into District Offices which can be replaced by

Community Welfare Centres in due course. Twenty-two such offices exist at the moment, fourteen of them established in the last 18 months.

It is intended to establish eight more District Offices in the near future, to bring the total of existing Community Welfare Centres and interim District Offices to thirty.

Four of the new offices will be in the country and four in the metropolitan area.

COMMUNITY WELFARE CONSULTATIVE COUNCILS:

Thirty Community Welfare Centre Consultative Councils are being established to serve the whole State. The Councils will be closely affiliated with the Community Welfare Centres, and each Council will serve a district made up of a group of Local Government areas.

It is anticipated that more Councils will be established as further Community Welfare Centres are constructed.

Public meetings to discuss the formation of the Councils are currently being held in seven areas (City of Adelaide, Christies Beach, Whyalla, Mount Gambier, Marion, Elizabeth, and Campbelltown) and it is intended that these seven Consultative Councils will be appointed within the next few weeks.

The other thirteen initial Councils will be appointed progressively during the year.

The Consultative Councils are being established to increase the range of welfare services available in local situations, and to reduce fragmentation and duplication in their provision. It is intended that the Councils will become closely involved in a general process of identifying and studying local welfare needs.

They will establish:-

- * priorities and planning in how best to provide welfare services through community, voluntary and statutory organisations.

- * close liaison and communications with all welfare service agencies in their areas, operating in as open a manner as possible. There will be regular meetings open to representatives of all agencies.
- * the involvement and participation of local people in planning welfare services and developing new and relevant local programmes.

The Consultative Councils will consist of:

1. The local Member of the House of Assembly, or his nominee.
2. Two representatives of local government bodies within the district.
3. An officer of the Department for Community Welfare.
4. Four to eight members of the local community with an interest in community welfare.

ABORIGINAL TASK FORCE:

The Government intends to employ a body of professionally competent aborigines to work directly with aboriginal people and groups.

They will:

- Establish contact with aboriginal communities and groups.
- Assist them to identify social needs.
- Work in liaison with those Government and voluntary agencies which can best meet aboriginal social needs.
- Work with community development staff in planning and implementing community development programmes and projects.
- Facilitate creative social interaction among aboriginal communities at the personal, group and community level.

Officers of the Department for Community Welfare, staff of the Institute of Technology, and leading members of the aboriginal community have been planning the development of the necessary professional training programme for members of this task force for more than twelve months.

Twenty students will commence the training course at the Institute of Technology in six weeks time.

This is the first course of its type in Australia. It has attracted Australia-wide interest, particularly since no educational pre-requisites have been specified. Of the twenty students, four are from the Northern Territory and three from Western Australia.

All twenty students will be financially supported during their training.

The course is a prototype for similar training courses which will be rapidly developed during the next few years to ensure that a significant number of aboriginals achieve professional or near professional status in the near future.

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